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Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8409th meeting
Monday, 26 November 2018, 11 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Wu Haitao	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Violation of the borders of the Russian Federation

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The representative of the United States has asked for the floor.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I am making this statement on behalf of the United States, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

We stand united in opposing Russia's attempt to discuss yesterday's serious escalation in the Kerch Strait under an agenda item entitled "Violation of the borders of the Russian Federation". We strongly support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. We want to express our deep concern about the incident, which represents a dangerous escalation and violation of international law. We look forward to discussing Russia's provocation under the appropriate agenda item. We therefore urge all Council members to vote against the adoption of the agenda as proposed by Russia.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In calling for this extraordinary meeting of the Security Council, Russia bases its position on the Council's provisional rules of procedure, in which rule 2 clearly states that the President shall call a meeting of the Security Council at the request of any member of the Council at any time to consider any issue. It is crucial that we understand that the Ukrainian delegation's counter-demand that we initiate a separate meeting under a different agenda item is nothing but an attempt to avoid responsibility for undermining international security. The agenda item proposed by Ukraine is inappropriate. I would like to ask if anyone has even read the letter of the Ukrainian Permanent Representative in question. The situation described in it refers us to events of four years ago and has nothing to do with what happened in the region yesterday.

What did happen on 25 November was that the Kyiv regime made a direct threat to international peace and security by ordering the Ukrainian Naval Forces to carry out an aggressive act of provocation with regard to the Russian Federation's State border, violating key provisions not only of international maritime law but also of common law, including the Charter of the United Nations, provisions that require that all States respect other States' sovereignty. The fact that this violation occurred — and moreover through manoeuvring in a narrow strait, a fairly dangerous method — could and did create risks to the normal movement of vessels in those waters. Needless to say, such banditry had to be stopped, and the international community has to understand where Kyiv's actions are leading.

We urge our partners on the Security Council not to take on any responsibility for the Ukrainian authorities' dangerous behaviour. If this forum continues to be used to cover for the Ukrainian regime's military provocations and to blame Russia for exercising its right to defend its borders, the Council's authority will suffer irreparable damage.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In view of the request and comments made by members of the Security Council, I intend to put the provisional agenda to the vote.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the provisional agenda for today's meeting. I shall put the provisional agenda to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation

Against:

France, Kuwait, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Peru

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The provisional agenda received 4 votes in favour, 7 votes against and 4 abstentions. The provisional agenda has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We regret the result of the vote. However, I would like to emphasize that no one can prevent Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, from

raising issues in the Council that we consider important, and doing it under agenda items that those issues relate to. This vote will have no effect on that, a vote in which States that claim to have self-sufficient and independent foreign policies, in obedience to the herd instinct and their fear of their Big Brothers in Washington, come out in support a scenario that is contrary to the principles of the Security Council and its rules of procedure.

Now they are more concerned about which agenda item to hold today's meeting under than about how to solve the problem. Frankly, this is reminiscent of playground arguments and these members are now bringing discredit on the Security Council in the same way that the Ukrainians' provocative actions bring discredit on the General Assembly. And yesterday, after Russia asked that this Security Council meeting be convened, our Western partners tried to present the whole thing as if it was Ukraine that had requested it rather than Russia. That is pettiness, gentlemen, pettiness on a pitiful scale.

Since they have prioritized procedural issues over the interests of the matter at hand, I will confine myself to this statement in explanation of vote and will not make a statement in the meeting convened under the Ukrainian letter, which is an agenda item that is not appropriate to our discussion.

On 25 November, three Ukrainian naval vessels illegally crossed Russia's State border, bound for the Kerch Strait. They did not respond to the legal demands of the ships and patrol boats of Russia's FSB border guards and Black Sea fleet and conducted a dangerous manoeuvre that created a threat to the normal movement of vessels in those waters. As I said, these actions violated the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law, including articles 19 and 21 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, which determine the right of coastal States to ensure safety in the maritime space, as well as the rules of peaceful passage through the territorial waters of the Russian Federation in the Black Sea. We regard those actions as a violation of Russia's sovereignty.

Those illegal actions forced Russian border guards to use force. Thanks to their restraint and high degree of professionalism, fatalities were avoided. The three Ukrainian servicemen injured in the incident were given the necessary medical assistance, and their lives were not threatened. The responsibility for the incident belongs to those who gave the vessels their criminal order to proceed. The ships that committed the violation have been detained at a Russian port, and criminal proceedings have been initiated.

Of late Kyiv has refrained from using military means to openly violate Russia's national borders. We had bilateral agreements in the Sea of Azov, which is an inland waterway for both Russia and Ukraine, to which Kyiv adhered with no problems of any kind. After construction finished on the Crimean bridge in September, literally two months ago, Ukrainian naval vessels passed freely under the bridge from Odessa to Berdyansk with the help of Russian pilots. In other words, the Ukrainians are well aware of the procedure for passage through the Kerch Strait and had abided by it until now. The control procedure takes no more than three hours and is part of Russian border guards' legal right to ensure security in Russia's territorial waters, including — and I want to emphasize this — because of an ongoing situation created by threats on the part of Ukrainian radicals who have publicly promised to blow up the Crimean bridge.

What changed yesterday? Why did three Ukrainian vessels illegally invade Russia's sovereign waters in order to be detained? This provocation was planned in advance, right before our eyes, and with the full connivance of Western States, which in practice long ago gave their Kyiv clients carte blanche for any act. In August, Mr. Yelchenko, Ukraine's representative to the United Nations, who is here today, announced preparations of what he called "unpleasant surprises" for Russia. At the beginning of November his delegation submitted a draft resolution on the Sea of Azov to the General Assembly that included accusations about Russia's militarization of the region, an anti-Russian document for which they had previously launched an advance campaign to win support. And in order to make sure that their propaganda really succeeds, they have now decided to bring in the Security Council. On top of that, in the past few months, with support from Washington, Kyiv has been aggressively fanning the flames of this subject of the so-called militarization of the Azov Sea, and all of this despite the fact that Russia has no plans to establish a new naval base there. The military forces and facilities there are commensurate with the task of providing security for the Crimean bridge.

The Kyiv authorities certainly do not need all these manipulations of international organizations to solve their country's problems. On 21 November, those who

follow the rapidly evolving tragedy of Ukraine marked that sad date, the fifth anniversary of the beginning of the so-called Maidan protests. It is obvious to all today that the Ukrainians have lost whatever remained of their trust in those who pushed them into the so-called revolution of dignity. Over the past five years, everything that our neighbours were proud of has vanished. Everything — the economy, industry, the social arena — is ruined.

Throughout those five years, and contrary to the interests of Ukrainians, the West, and the United States of America above all, has been stubbornly pushing through its geopolitical project in Ukraine in various ways, from distributing cookies to pouring billions of dollars into facilities for its own benefit. Its main mission was to bring fratricidal internal strife to a traditionally peaceful Ukraine and foment a quarrel between two fraternal peoples, Russians and Ukrainians, thereby weakening Russia. However, it is already obvious that those plans have failed to be fully realized and that those who participated in them have lost all authority in the eyes of the Ukrainian people. The best proof of that is President Poroshenko's extremely low popularity ratings, which anyone would be embarrassed to head into elections with. And those elections are just around the corner, four months away.

So then how does one hold on to power? Simple. By organizing an act of provocation and once again blaming Russia for everything. By inflating one's ratings, by once again presenting oneself to voters as the nation's saviour from that mythical Russian aggression, and by imposing martial law. That is what the Kyiv authorities are doing right now. And we all understand the reason for this martial law and its predictable continuation perfectly well. It is in order to cancel the elections, whatever Mr. Poroshenko may say to the contrary.

In the past five years, through brainwashing and total anti-Russian propaganda, they have succeeded in sowing enmity and hatred for Russia in some parts of Ukrainian society, using undemocratic methods very actively to impose their opinion on the passive majority. However, during that time, what those here have never managed to do is to sow hostility to Ukrainians on the part of my compatriots. We still love them, believe in their wisdom and take them in willingly. We listen to their stories of the suffering, misery and wrongdoings that are happening in that once rich and successful country, from which people today are scattering in every direction in the realization that this ship is sinking. Yes, gentlemen, that five-year anti-Russian political project — one might as well call it Anti-Russia — is a fiasco for all to see, and everyone here knows very well what the real pace — as opposed to the declared one — is of the so-called Maidan reforms and other dangerous and destructive processes that are pushing Ukraine ever closer to the abyss.

In such circumstances, there is one reliable method, well-known to every barely literate political technologist, that bankrupt politicians clinging to power all over the world resort to — war. That is why it has been impossible to put out the flames of the fratricidal war in the Donbas, and why it has nothing to do with that mythical Russian aggression. It is because the people in this room are extinguishing those flames by dousing them with petrol made of Ukrainian nationalism and Russophobia. And that is despite the fact that a plan for combating that destructive fire — the Minsk agreements — was developed and approved, including by the Security Council, long ago. It is no secret that if it wanted to, Washington could resolve the so-called conflict in eastern Ukraine in 10 minutes simply by giving the appropriate command to its clients in Kyiv.

And now, as the March elections are approaching, the bankrupt Maidan team is in dire need of a serious worsening of the situation, and ideally a full-on war. Without that, it has no hope of remaining in power. It needs another shot of anti-Russian dope so that the people who have been mired in poverty for the past five years will once again believe that all their troubles are due not to their rulers and their Western puppeteers, but to Russia.

Unlike others, we in Russia are not afraid to call things by their proper names. We do not lower our eyes in shame, as our Polish colleagues do, for example, as they see how people in their neighbouring State glorify those who during the Second World War exterminated hundreds of thousands of Poles, Jews and Russians in the most cruel way. Today, the Ukrainian clients of some of our colleagues daily discredit the very universal values that they so loudly promote and, incidentally, that we in Russia sincerely believe in. We introduce and develop them ourselves, without any decrees or fanfare.

As far as Russia's State borders are concerned, there is no need to worry. Our country has never struck the first blow, but we do know how to stand up for

ourselves. The people of Crimea, like Russia's other regions, are well protected.

We know that the delegations that initiated today's vote are waiting to state their opinions at the next meeting, and we know that they will repeat their well-known mantra of what they call aggression, annexation and occupation. But we also know what they will not say, about the fact that the regime in Kyiv does not need peace. It is not trying to create a decent life for its people and it is not interested in a dialogue with its own people in the east. It is not interested in the so-called European values that it is forever touting. The only thing that the Kyiv politicians are interested in is maintaining their own power and justifying their failures as the result of acts of so-called Russian aggression. And the only thing that the Western sponsors of that regime are interested in is maintaining their dominance by undermining good-neighbourly relations among the fraternal peoples of Europe, Asia, Africa and the rest of the world through the ancient Roman principle of divide and rule.

Instead of repeating the past, we should learn from its mistakes and build a new world based on multilateralism, mutual respect and indivisible security. We urge everyone to do so alongside us.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.